The Consequence Matrix and Void Crawl

For the MasterBook System and other 2D10 RPGs

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This document has not been thoroughly play-tested and some need for adaptation should be expected

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Introduction

This document was inspired by two mechanics found in the RPG *Liminal* Horror and the *Mothership* RPG campaign *A Pound of Flesh*. In both cases, a mechanic that *Liminal Horror* refers to as a “Doom Clock” was showcased. This “Doom Clock” represents a series of events that will occur if the players do nothing. The Doom Clock in *A Pound of Flesh* was particularly detailed, but neither representations of the Doom Clock seemed to expand on what would happen if players did, in fact, interfere with the course of events. Having some kind of structure can be helpful, especially if an adventure is being improvised on the fly, and so this documents offers a “Consequence Matrix”, which can give some aid to improvising what to do if the players interfere at particular moments. This Consequence Matrix can be expanded for more detail, or multiple Consequence Matrix can be created for the main adventure and long with side quests, and so forth. Having these on hand can offer an additional tool for either improvising a whole adventure, or improvising a reaction when the players do something unexpected and the GM needs to get them back on track.

In addition to the Consequence Matrix, *Liminal Horror* offers a “Void Crawl”, which is meant to act as a role-playing mechanic to improvise encounters and events for players as they explore an unknown area. Something like this can be useful for the MasterBook system, given that it can be used for many different settings, be they fantasy, horror, or science fiction. Some adaptation is needed for the 2D10 dice system, but that is more of a technical issue than anything else.

Finally, the Void Crawl can be further adapted using the game *Holocaustic Dungeons* by Precis Intermedia. *Holocaustic Dungeons* simulates a one-shot adventure using a hex grid with pre-planned rooms. Rather than pre-planning, however, the dungeon (or possibly other areas) can be improvised by adapting the rooms to a Void Crawl chart and simply rolling for rooms. A blank sheet with a hex grid pattern might be useful for mapping where the players have gone in case they want to backtrack, but it is not necessary if the point is to improvise an adventure on the spot.

Please Note

These tools have not been extensively tested, and are meant to be modified according to the GM’s needs. Think of them more as raw ideas that need to be refined for a particular GM’s taste rather than a hard-and-fast ruleset.

The Consequence Matrix

The Consequence Matrix might seem overkill at first, but it is meant for improvising responses to the player actions on the spot. Below is a small example of how the world of the adventure can react to player behavior. To read the matrix, count by rows first, then column. For example, (1, 4) means “Row 1, Column 4”. There are also event “Triggers” and “Timers” to note when a particular event activates in response to player action, or as a consequence of another event.

In the example below, a group of cultists want to invoke a ritual to summon a malign force and are kidnapping townsfolk to sacrifice for this purpose. This might make for a good one shot adventure, but can be expanded into a campaign if multiple Consequence Matrices are used for the main adventure, side quests, and so forth.

	1	2	3	4
1	The starting scenario: Cultists on the outskirts of town have begun to kidnap individual townsfolk for a ritual to summon a malign force	**Timer:** 1D4 days until… Cultists build a shrine made out of bodies of the kidnapped townsfolk	**Trigger:** (1,2) **Timer:** 1D4 hours until… Lead cultist begins a ritual that summons a malign force that possesses the lead cultist, bringing that force into the world	**Trigger:** (1,3) **Timer:** 1D4 hours until… The cultists, empowered by their demon leader capture the rest of the town for a mass sacrifice, then move on to the next town.
2	**Thwarted:** (1,1) Lead cultist delays the ritual and sends followers to infiltrate the town and find out who is preventing the kidnappings	**Thwarted:** (1,2) Cult leader or surviving cultists scatter as the shrine is destroyed or investigated, infiltrating the town to seek revenge	**Thwarted:** (1,3) The malign force is prevented from emerging into this world. The cultists scatter as a result and try to rebuild their operations	**Thwarted:** (1,4) The demon leader is expelled from reality, and the cultists are forced to flee or be captured or killed due to revenge, law enforcement, or other investigation
3	**Trigger:** Cultists find PCs Undercover cultists find a way to capture the PCs and take them to a ritual site. Killing the PCs and taking their bodies is fine as well	**Trigger:** (2,2) **Timer:** 1D4 days until… The cultists integrate with the town, using the discovery of the cultist activities to obtain positions of trust and influence	**Trigger:** (2,3) **Timer:** 1D4 days until… The cultists go to war with each other over who should be a new leader. Dead bodies start showing up with signs of ritual mutilation	**Trigger:** (2,4) The malign force wants revenge and will use its influence on other human assets to locate and punish the PCs. **Continue:** (3,2)
4	**Trigger:** PCs captured **Timer:** 1D4 hours until… Lead cultist explains what is going on, and attempts to use the PCs as part of the sacrifice **Continue:** (1,2)	**Trigger:** (3,2) **Timer:** 1D4 days until… After establishing a new ritual site, the cultists decide to hunt down the PCs before collecting more townsfolk for the ritual **Continue:** (3,1)	**Trigger:** (3,3) **Timer:** 1D4 days until… Having established a new hierarchy, the cultists regroup and begin hunting the PCs and townsfolk for revenge **Continue:** (3,2)	**Trigger:** (2,4) Surviving cultists cast a curse on the PCs, the effects of which according to the GM’s whim. This could mean that the PCs need to hunt the cultists down as a hook for the next game

The Void Crawl

What follows below is a recreation of the *Liminal Horror* Void Crawl RPG as adapted for the MasterBook system. The full Void Crawl system is not included here; *Liminal Horror* relies on an Encounter Die system which is used for specific encounter types and a Tension Die system for creating a sense of "time running out". These are used with the Void Crawl to create an impending sense of doom as the player progress through the game.

How to Read the Void Crawl Table

The adaptation to the MasterBook RPG required some alterations to the basic Void Crawl system. Here are some terms to know when reading the blank template table that appears later on in this document:

- **Skip**: As the players progress, the GM might want to make the adventure more or less dangerous depending on the circumstances. Use the "Skip"column to write in which number to skip towards in case of a particular roll. For example, a 2D10 roll of 11 would mean the players get a chance to recover from injuries or threats. A GM might decide that this is too easy and write in the "Skip" column that a roll of 11 should be redirect to the entry indicated by a roll of 5 ("Horrific Discovery")
- **A/E/D**: These letters mean "**A**ttack", "**E**vent", or "**D**iscovery". Each has a number indicating a percentile chance of occurrence. On the blank template below, there are labels such as "Generally Safe", "Major Threat", and so on. "Generally Safe" rows could have a very low "Attack", while "Major Threat" rolls could have a very high "Attack". Surviving an "Attack" roll on a "Major Threat" row might mean the threat is there, but has not recognized the players yet. "Event" or "Discovery" percent numbers can vary according to the whims of the GM
- **Generally Safe**: No major expected threat, although anything could happen (see A/E/D)
- **Major Threat**: Anything from a very large monster to the impending crash of a starship. This could also be an opportunity to present some kind of major battle to close out the adventure
- **Risk/Difficulty**: These are any hurdles that get in the way of players and the varying levels of consequences for not being able to get past them
- **Refer to table**: A Void Crawl table need not stand alone. Use this column to refer to other tables, or reference documents to expand on the possible results of a particular dice roll

An Example Table

One one of the following pages is an example Void Crawl table adapted from the *Liminal Horror* game. The A/E/D percentile numbers are inserted as examples only, and each entry in the table references some other fictional table that could be used as an expanded reference. This need not be the case for all adventures - this adapted Void Crawl is just an example.

Templates

Following the example table, a blank template has been provided for GMs to print out and adapt for specific use. Following the blank template, another template has been provided for anyone interested in adapting the dungeon system from *Holocaustic Dungeons* to a 2D10 or MasterBook system.

About the Holocaustic Dungeons Table

Some readers will note that the *Holocaustic Dungeons* table is not complete. In the original game, there are twenty-seven dungeon rooms, including the first room. In order to work with a 2D10 dice roll system, some of these rooms had to be reduced to nineteen to fit the 2D10 probability curve. In addition, some rooms were too specific to the *Holocaustic Dungeons* game to be useful in other games, so some paring down was necessary, anyway. It goes without saying that GMs are not limited the table that has been provided - any GM can simply adapt the table to whatever is desired, or come up with a system to be able to roll on all twenty-seven rooms. If nothing else, there are websites and apps that can simulate a D27 dice roll, so there are options. The paring down of rooms only occurred to make the system compatible with the MasterBook 2D10 system.

It is worthwhile to reiterate a statement from earlier: having a hex grid on hand can be useful for making note of rooms so as to allow the players to backtrack as needed. Further, *Holocaustic Dungeons* has a basic resource mechanic to enable GMs to simulate the dwindling of food resources as players navigate a dungeon. None that is included here, but having something similar on hand can be useful. Finally, GMs can take advantage of an improvised dungeon to create a space where the players must not only escape, but return to for more exploration. Perhaps, on the second visit, a door is discovered that leads to a deeper dungeon, an unexplored part, and so forth - an infinite dungeon to be discovered and revisited at will.

A note about how the order of rooms was determined: A 2D10 system creates a probability curve where the most likely roll is going to be somewhere between nine and thirteen. This is why, on the blank template, “Empty Chamber” is marked at the dice roll of eleven. It is also why, in the blank template, dice rolls of ten, eleven, and twelve are marked as “Generally Safe”. There is a greater chance of rolling these numbers than there is of, say, a two or a twenty.

This is where the “skip” mechanic comes in. Because the most likely dice rolls on the *Holocaustic Dungeons* template are “Danger or Trap Chamber”, “Empty Chamber”, or “Extreme Danger or Trap Chamber”, players might end up running a more brutal gauntlet than intended. A sympathetic GM might thereafter use the “skip” mechanic to make the dungeon a little easier to navigate… or not.

As a general rule of thumb, GMs should feel free to modify the tables however they like.

2	skip	Traumatic PC Change	A [00] • E [85] • D [50]	Fallout Table
3	skip	Encounter	A [90] • E [25] • D [10]	Encounter Table
4	skip	Encounter	A [90] • E [25] • D [10]	Encounter Table
5	skip	Horrific Discovery	A [10] • E [10] • D [95]	Horror Table
6	skip	Practical Setback	A [10] • E [50] • D [10]	Setback Table
7	skip	Environmental Change	A [10] • E [30] • D [90]	Event Table
8	skip	Clue	A [10] • E [90] • D [75]	Clue Table
9	skip	Temporary effects end	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
10	skip	Recover	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
11	skip	Recover	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
12	skip	Recover	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
13	skip	Temporary effects end	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
14	skip	Clue	A [10] • E [90] • D [75]	Clue Table
15	skip	Environmental Change	A [10] • E [30] • D [90]	Event Table
16	skip	Practical Setback	A [10] • E [50] • D [10]	Setback Table
17	skip	Horrific Discovery	A [10] • E [10] • D [95]	Horror Table
18	skip	Encounter	A [90] • E [25] • D [10]	Encounter Table
19	skip	Encounter	A [90] • E [25] • D [10]	Encounter Table
20	skip	Traumatic PC Change	A [00] • E [85] • D [50]	Fallout Table

2	skip	Major Threat	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
3	skip	Major Threat	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
4	skip	Heavy risk/difficulty	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
5	skip	Heavy risk/difficulty	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
6	skip	Medium risk/difficulty	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
7	skip	Medium risk/difficulty	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
8	skip	Neutral or Light risk/difficulty	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
9	skip	Neutral or Light risk/difficulty	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
10	skip	Generally Safe	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
11	skip	Generally Safe	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
12	skip	Generally Safe	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
13	skip	Neutral or Light risk/difficulty	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
14	skip	Neutral or Light risk/difficulty	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
15	skip	Medium risk/difficulty	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
16	skip	Medium risk/difficulty	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
17	skip	Heavy risk/difficulty	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
18	skip	Heavy risk/difficulty	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
19	skip	Major Threat	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
20	skip	Major Threat	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:

2	skip	Exit Chamber	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
3	skip	Ally is Found Chamber	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
4	skip	Lavish Treasure Chamber	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
5	skip	Curing or Healing Chamber	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
6	skip	Weapons Cache	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
7	skip	Combination of Multiple Chamber Types	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
8	skip	Sliding Door Chamber	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
9	skip	Adversary in this Chamber	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
10	skip	Danger or Trap Chamber	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
11	skip	Empty Chamber	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
12	skip	Extreme Danger or Trap Chamber	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
13	skip	Extreme Adversary in this Chamber	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
14	skip	Sign on Display Chamber	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
15	skip	Teleport Chamber	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
16	skip	Wish, Resource, or Market Chamber	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
17	skip	Wellspring or Enhancement Chamber	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
18	skip	Treasure Chamber	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
19	skip	Special Chamber	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table:
20	skip	Great Ally Found Chamber	A [00] • E [00] • D [00]	Refer to table: